

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FEB, 2016

VOL. 37, #6

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Join Us For Our Next Meeting

Feb. 10, 2016

Drinks @ 6pm, Dinner @ 6:30

Judson Manor

East 107th St & Chester

Topic: The 2nd Annual Trivia Game

Pictures, Painting and Images

Rules will be explained at the meeting.



March & April Program Switch

**March 4th will be Ellen Connally speaking
on: Salmon P. Chase**

**April 13th will be William Vodrey speaking
on: Lincoln's Two Vice Presidents**

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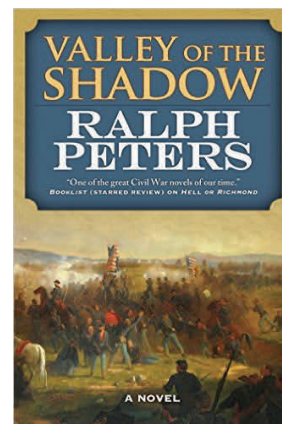
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Valley of the Shadows. BY Ralph Peters

Review by Dennis Keating



Ralph Peters is a retired Army officer, journalist, and award-winning Civil War novelist. His Civil War novels include *Cain at Gettysburg*, *Hell or Richmond*, and the Owen Parry (pen name) mystery series. His latest novel is *Valley of the Shadows*. It covers the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign, including Jubal Early's raid to Washington.

Peters' portrayal of both the major events of this campaign and its leading characters is gripping. The major engagements that Peters covers are Monocacy, Third Winchester, Cedar Creek, and Fisher's Hill. In addition, there's the battle that never happened when Early's advance halted in front of the fortress defenses of Washington City at Fort Stevens with President Abraham Lincoln looking on and Early decided against an attack, retreating back to the Valley. Peters captures the desperate nature of the outnumbered Early's mission to defend the Valley and divert some of the Union forces besieging Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Petersburg. This is most dramatic at Cedar Creek, when Gordon's surprise attack on October 19 initially smashed Phil Sheridan's army until his dramatic ride from Winchester and rally of his battered troops, leading to his counterattack that led to victory that same day. Historians credit Sheridan's rout of Early's army, after Sherman's capture of Atlanta, with ensuring Lincoln's re-election the following month.

Peters captures many of the leading military figures of this campaign and the conflicts among them. In addition to some individual soldiers, the leading military figures portrayed on the Union side are: George Crook, George Armstrong Custer, James Ricketts, Phil Sheridan, Lew Wallace, and the two Ohioans who would both later become Presidents of the United States: Rutherford Hayes and William McKinley. On the Confederate side are: Clement Evans, John Brown Gordon, and Jubal Early (Lee's "Bad Old Man"). Peters provides brief post-Civil War profiles of their lives.

He also provides the reader with his historical sources and recommendations for further reading. His favorite memoir is John Brown Gordon's *Reminiscences of the Civil War*. He also cites the memoir of Private George Nichols of the 61st Georgia. Also recommended are the memoirs of Sheridan and Wallace, as well as those of other main combatants. Peters also recommends several campaign and battle histories.

For the epic battle of Cedar Creek, Peters recommends Thomas Lewis, *The Guns of Cedar Creek*.* The December, 2015, issue of *Civil War Times* contains a tour of the key sites of this battle. The Fall, 2015, issue of *Hallowed Ground* contains a moving article about the return of Sheridan's veterans beginning in 1883 to the Shenandoah Valley, where they had been reviled for the destructive campaign ordered by Grant to deprive the Confederates of their breadbasket: "Heal the Wounds" by Jonathan A. Noyalas, author of *Civil War Legacy in the Shenandoah: Remembrance, Reunion, and Reconciliation*.

*Also see my article last Fall in *The Charger*.

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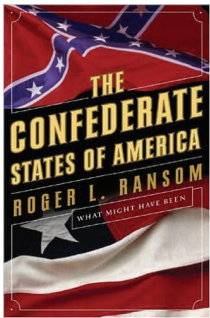
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The Confederate States of America by Roger L. Ransom

Review by Michael V. Wells



The Confederate States of America is an alternative history of the Civil War by a respected historian and economist. This is not science fiction (nothing wrong with SF at all); there are no AK-47s mysteriously appearing in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. This is instead well-written scholarship taking the reader on a journey through the historiography and uses of alternative history, as well as the background and actual history of the Civil War and then into an alternative history of the war and its aftermath. All of this is rooted in a deep knowledge of the Civil War period as well a carefully delineated model of how to approach alternative history. Civil War books

tumble from publishers by the thousands. It is a treat to read one with a unique viewpoint that expands the reader's understanding of the era of the American *Iliad*.

February events in the Civil War

By Dennis Keating

1862

Captures of Forts Henry and Donelson by U.S. Grant,
followed by the Confederate evacuation of Nashville, Tennessee
Capture of Roanoke Island, North Carolina by Ambrose Burnside

1864

Battle of Olustee, Florida, with Federal withdrawal to Jacksonville

1865

Hampton Roads peace conference (Lincoln and 3 Confederate Commissioners)

Occupation of Columbia, South Carolina by William T. Sherman

Sinking in Charleston Harbor of the USS Housatonic by the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley (which then sunk)



SAVE THE DATES!!



Our field trip this year will take place on September 22, 23 and 24. We will be following General Grant as he encounters General Robert E Lee for the first time at The Wilderness and Spotsylvania. Kris White, who some of you know from last year's trip, will be our guide. You won't want to miss this exciting weekend. More details will be given in the May Charger.

Jean Rhodes